

4/1/92

Dear Harold,

I suppose it is a tribute to our long years of friendship that - despite our difficulty over Sylvia's papers - when this problem arose in our community, we thought of each other. Thanks for your letter. You may write to me again, your health permitting. We ought to enjoy whatever time we have left.

You never made any secret of your preference for Hood College. I was angry because I wanted Lucy Stone left alone to make her own decision and, hopefully, get interested in Sylvia's work. He might have done more than Oliver Stone to release the HSCA files. But if that were not the case, I needed the chance to work with her papers for a few months to get the background on the early days.

"Anger" does not describe my reaction to what Jerry has done. I have never been as shocked and dismayed by the behavior of one whom I have known for so long. I'm glad Sylvia did not live to see this; she would have been heartbroken.

Months ago, after the Dallas symposium, Oliver Stone and his researchers began "going to work" on

Jerry, soliciting him to do an article on media reaction to JFK. They had Warner Bros. send Jerry a box of clippings.

He and I talked, as we have in the past, about doing the CBS book together. I had never shared documents with him, but I told him about the McCloy stuff in general terms. I wanted Jerry's help particularly with regard to interviewing people with whom I could not comfortably speak. He always told me he'd be "honored", but never seemed willing to arrange his schedule during business trips to New York to accomplish these interviews. I thought he was lazy, as Sylvia had often implied.

Then, several weeks ago, he called me after having an initial meeting with Jonathan Larsen, editor of the Voice. Without my advance knowledge or consent, he had told Larsen he had a friend with stuff on CBS. Now, he asked me to make the McCloy documents available. I said no. This wasn't something to be treated

in a quickie piece that would be lost in the din. I told him that I felt I had the right to pick-and-choose the time and place to do battle with CBS over the use of these materials.

As an accommodation, I told Jerry that, if Laven were interested, I could do a companion piece on other aspects of CBS. He offered to introduce me, but of course he never did.

I had coffee with Jerry and his staff writer pal from The Voice following the March 3rd Town Hall debate over "JFK". It was clear to me that they were out to do a hatchet job to try to embarrass CBS into releasing all its material.

The next day, Jerry was on the train to Washington, where he "found" the documents. He didn't call me about them for another week. When he did, he lied. First he said his co-writer had found them. Then, he admitted his co-writer wasn't even there. The article on the left side picks up the story.

To show you how dishonest they were,
Ellen McCloy told the voice staff writer that,
at first, Salant told her she might have
to keep her distance from the project. Of
course, the article as published doesn't mention
this important fact, which vitiates any notion of a
malicious or sinister conspiracy on the part of
Salant-McCloy.

Note: The account of the
Nis interview comes from
a girl who was 10 years old!

The real story here is that McCloy didn't want to
go on TV to defend the report. He had doubts.
Someone (obviously, LBS) was pushing his
buttons. Someone else (obviously Paley and
Stanton) was pushing Salant's.

The Voice article is undoubtedly the worst
piece of crap Jerry has ever done. It's all
mired in the 1960s, as if there was nothing
more recent in the media to denounce. It
contains several serious ~~errors~~ inaccuracies.
It reads like the tabloid episode it is.

What saddens me most is Jerry's apparent loss of reasoning power. He doesn't seem to be able to think never through. It's as if I never knew him at all! What could he have hoped to accomplish by this?

When I read the voice piece, I began to cry uncontrollably. All of the hurt and pain was dredged up from 16 years ago. I thought I had gotten rid of it. I guess I only buried it.

I will, of course, not work with Jerry in the future. I still have plenty of material, but will never let it out of my hands after this.

Harold, the reasons for my delay are many, and complex: lack of funds, my career difficulties, letting that pain reside, fear of legal reprisals (mainly under the Copyright Law, which Congress may soon change in my favor). But I also must tell you that the story of CBS and the

Assassination is the story of Paley, Stanton,
Salant and Mudgeley — who are either
dead or long-retired — not Cienfuegos or
Rothstein.

I owe Dan. He tried to help my career
by giving me research assignments on MLK.
What he didn't know was that I was already
a marked man. But the point is, he helped
me. I spoke to him about JFK. He wasn't as
hard-line as Mudgeley and Salant. I know he's
still waiting for a break in the case. Do I
kick him in the teeth? No! I will give this
man some slack and not try to destroy his
career for decisions he never made. I will give
him a bit more time to overcome the constraints
of the past now that CBS has a new owner and
the President of CBS News is someone I know
and feel is trustworthy (I sent them this piece
before the Voice came out).

The subject of CBS News and the Kennedy Assassination is a case study in the behavior of a major journalism institution in the midst of a crisis of confidence in the government. It is a subject for a competent, thorough, well-written, well-documented job of history and journalistic criticism. Not a sensationalist piece put out to take advantage of the hype over a really boring movie. I want this project to stand or fall on its own merit and serve as a worthy companion to Sylvia's Reservations.

If we were living in the time of Beethoven, and if I had a wealthy patron, perhaps I could afford to sit in my garden and write this tome. I can't. I have to work and commute a full day. I have to put myself in a position where my editorial judgment is unfettered and I can no longer be hurt.

In the meantime, I'm working bit-by-bit with the FBI's 1977-78 release, which is on microfiche at the New York Public Library. Saves me the money and time of having to come down.

Take care of yourself, you old coot,
and give Helen Prouty a kick in the
butt for me.

Best regards,

Rye

P.S. Lunsford's latest is out, and Kantor's
book was received in paper.

If Sylvia's book is received, please see
that it is without revision or updating.

By the way, I'm the same age that Sylvia
was when she began working on the case.

Rye